



Frequently Asked Questions Multi-Hazard Mitigation Planning

Question: What is the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000?

Answer: *The federal Disaster Mitigation Act (DMA) of 2000 (Public Law 106-390), commonly known as the 2000 Stafford Act amendments, was approved by Congress on October 10, 2000. This act required state and local governments to develop hazard mitigation plans as a condition for federal grant assistance. Among other things, this legislation reinforces the importance of pre-disaster infrastructure mitigation planning to reduce disaster losses nationwide. DMA 2000 is aimed primarily at the control and streamlining of the administration of federal disaster relief and programs to promote mitigation activities. Prior to 2000, federal legislation provided funding for disaster relief, recovery, and some hazard mitigation planning. The DMA improves upon the planning process by emphasizing the importance of communities planning for disasters before they occur.*

Question: What is a Local Hazard Mitigation Plan?

Answer: *A Local Hazard Mitigation Plan is prepared by local governments in response to the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (Public Law 106-390). These plans act as a keyway to federal funding afforded under the Robert T. Stafford Act. These plans meet statutory requirements that include:*

- *Organizing Resources*
- *Assessing Risk*
- *Engaging the Public*
- *Identifying Goals and Objectives*
- *Identifying Actions*
- *Developing Plan Maintenance and Implementation Strategies*

Question: What is meant by *hazard mitigation*?

Answer: *Hazard mitigation is defined as any sustained action taken to permanently eliminate or reduce long-term risks to human life and property from natural hazards. Sustained action means an action that is long term in its impact. This is an essential component of emergency management, along with preparedness, protection, response and recovery. Disasters can have significant impacts on communities. They can destroy or damage life, property and infrastructure, local economies, and the environment.*

Question: Who is involved?

Answer: *The Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 has defined a “local government” as: Any county, municipality, city, town, public authority, school district, special district, intrastate district, council of governments (regardless of whether the council of*

governments is incorporated as a nonprofit corporation under State law), regional or interstate government entity, or agency or instrumentality of a local government; any Indian tribe or authorized tribal organization, or Alaska Native village or organization; and any rural community, unincorporated town or village, or other public entity.

Any local government wishing to pursue funding afforded under FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Programs must have an approved hazard mitigation plan in order to be eligible to apply for these funds.

Question: What is the Steering Committee?

Answer: *A steering committee is a group of stakeholder representatives (usually 13-15 members) from within the planning area who volunteer to oversee the plan update process. This committee makeup usually includes a variety of stakeholders, such as:*

- *Citizens*
- *Academia*
- *State Emergency Management*
- *County Emergency Management*
- *Local Emergency Management*
- *Municipal Planning Partners*
- *Special Purpose District Planning Partners*
- *Business Representatives*
- *Red Cross*

The Steering Committee meets regularly throughout the plan development process and provides direction and guidance to the planning team on implementation of the scope of work for the plan's development. The Steering Committee will determine the goals and objectives for the plan, the public involvement strategy, review the risk assessment and provide input to the planning team on the assembly of the plan. All Steering Committee meetings are open to the public and the dates and times of these meetings are posted on the Hazard Mitigation Plan website. The intent of the group is to help limit the amount of time required for involvement by every member of the planning partnership by helping to lead the planning effort.

Question: What hazards will the mitigation plan address?

Answer: *At a minimum, the plan must address the natural hazards of concern that could impact the planning area. It may also include a select number of technological or human caused hazards. It should also be noted that there are many secondary hazards that are directly attributable to these primary hazards that will also be addressed by the plan as part of the analysis of the primary hazard of concern.*

Question: Will Global Warming/Climate Change be addressed in the Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan?

Answer: *Yes. While climate change will not be viewed as a stand alone hazard in this plan, there will be detailed discussions of the potential impact of climate change on those applicable hazards of concern.*

Question: Does the State of Washington have a State Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan?

Answer: Yes. The State of Washington is also required to respond to the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 by developing a plan. In fact, if the state does not have a plan, no local governments within the state are eligible for any of the grant programs normally available as a result of developing a HMP. By law, the local plans are to be consistent with the recommendations of the state plan. The State of Washington actually has an Enhanced Plan, which means that we receive increased funding amounts after a disaster.

Question: As a citizen, how does this effort affect me?

Answer: As a citizen within a participating jurisdiction, you will be able to reap the benefits of the risk reduction actions identified by your local government. Sometimes these can be a direct impact to your property in the form of reduced insurance premiums and reduced risk if you live in a high hazard area. Most of the time, these benefits are secondary. By reducing risk exposure, your local government does not have to expend as many resources on preparedness, response or recovery from the impacts of natural hazards.

Question: How will it affect my community?

Answer: By participating in this planning effort and adopting the updated plan, your community will be eligible to pursue funding under any of the five (5) FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Programs. These programs provide millions of dollars worth of grant funding annually for risk reduction measures identified in these plans. Additionally, if your community participates in FEMA's Community Rating System (CRS) program, this plan may have direct impact on reducing the cost of flood insurance within your community.

Question: What is the Community Rating System?

Answer: The National Flood Insurance Program's (NFIP) Community Rating System (CRS) is a voluntary incentive program that recognizes and encourages community floodplain management activities that exceed the minimum NFIP requirements. As a result, flood insurance premium rates are discounted to reflect the reduced flood risk resulting from the community actions meeting the three goals of the CRS:

1. Reduce flood losses;
2. Facilitate accurate insurance rating, and
3. Promote the awareness of flood insurance.

For CRS participating communities, flood insurance premium rates are discounted in increments of 5%; i.e., a Class 1 community would receive a 45% premium discount, while a Class 9 community would receive a 5% discount (a Class 10 is not participating in the CRS and receives no discount). The CRS classes for local communities are based on 18 creditable activities, organized under four categories:

1. *Public Information;*
2. *Mapping and Regulations;*
3. *Flood Damage Reduction, and*
4. *Flood Preparedness.*

Question: What if my city is not a part of the Hazard Mitigation planning process?

Answer: *If your community is not covered by a local hazard mitigation plan, they have two options:*

- *Option #1 - They can link to the City of Covington's Hazard Mitigation Plan by following the "linkage" procedures included in the plan once complete. It should be noted that this linkage will have to occur once this initial plan update process is completed.*
- *Option #2 - Prepare a single jurisdiction plan that meets the CFR requirements for that jurisdiction.*

Question: Why should I get involved?

Answer: *The law specifies that this be an "open public process" where the public is given the opportunity to provide comment on all phases of the plan's development. The reason that this is important is that it is the average citizen that is most severely impacted by the impacts of natural hazards. When these events occur, homes are damaged, functionality of critical facilities is interrupted, services are interrupted, and the economy is impacted; all having a direct impact on the citizen. The principal goal of this plan is to reduce risk. The large majority of the risk exposure within the City is privately held property. It is not possible to identify and implement risk reduction strategies without the support of the property owners targeted by these strategies. Therefore, there must be public support for these initiatives in order for there to be any successful implementation of the recommendations of this plan.*

Question: What can I do to support this process?

Answer: *Participate! When you see a notice for a public meeting, make an attempt to attend at least one meeting. When you see an article in the paper about this plan, read it. If you get mailed a questionnaire, please complete it. Review the website periodically to obtain an update on the process. And most importantly, spread the word. Tell your friends, family, and neighbors about this process. This plan is very important to the health and welfare of the citizens of the City of Covington. If you don't understand something, or want to provide input, contact the City of Covington's Public Works Department for more information.*

Question: Does it cost me or my jurisdiction anything to produce this plan?

Answer: *Seventy five percent (75%) of the cost associated with the preparation of this plan is being provided by a FEMA Hazard Mitigation Planning grant. Twelve and one half (12.5%) of the cost is provided by the State of Washington and the remaining twelve and one half (12.5%) of the cost is an “in-kind” contribution from the planning team and the planning partners this plan will cover. “In-kind” contribution means non-monetary contributions such as: staff time, facilities, printing cost, etc.*

Question: Where are the hazards in my area?

Answer: *By law, this planning effort must map the extent and location of all hazards of concern utilizing the best available data and science. This planning effort has identified 6 natural hazards that have the potential to impact the planning area. These maps are currently being produced and/or updated as part of this planning process. As these maps become available they will be presented to the public via various mediums. The City has established a website where this information can be viewed as it becomes available. The website address is:*

<http://www.covingtonwa.gov/hazardmitigation/index.html>

Question: Who can I contact for questions?

Answer: *City of Covington
Public Works Department
Shellie Bates
(253) 480-2463*

Or:

*Tetra Tech, Inc.
Beverly O’Dea, CEM
(253) 301-1330*

Or visit the Hazard Mitigation Plan website at:

<http://www.covingtonwa.gov/hazardmitigation/index.html>

Question: Where can I get more information about public meeting dates?

Answer: *As public meeting dates are established they will be advertised to the public in two ways. First, all public meeting dates will be posted to the Hazard Mitigation Plan website.*

Second, the City will disseminate a press release to all media outlets discussing public meeting purposes and dates.

Question: When will the plan be finished? And will it be available to the public?

Answer: *It is anticipated that this plan update process will take 9 to 12 months to complete, at which time it will be submitted to Washington State Emergency Management Division and FEMA for their review and approval. This schedule is contingent upon many factors that can impact schedule and timeline. The timeline for submittal will be continuously updated throughout the process as planning milestones are completed. Once the first draft is completed, it will be available for public review and comment prior to the plan being finalized and submitted to FEMA.*

Question: How can I get a copy of the Multi-Hazard Mitigation plan once it is finished?

Answer: *Once the draft plan is assembled and is considered to be ready for public review and comment, it will be posted to the Hazard Mitigation Plan website. There will also be an additional round of public meetings where the draft plan will be presented to the public as well as a round of press releases announcing that the plan is available for public review and comment.*